

# 'Living Rooms'

Design Home Independence Future old

## Design and Maintaining Independence in Later Life

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### The Investigation

#### Objectives

The investigation aims to inform the design and construction of a physical living environment that can be utilised as a test lab in evaluating theories and conceptual designs in response to the ageing population and independent living. The project aims to identify the needs associated with old age while establishing the potential changing needs and aspirations of the future old.

#### Plan

The research proposes that the use of artefacts in user centred design research may aid enquiry into user needs and provoke new scenarios for investigation. The enquiry suggests that user issues that may not be verbalised could be recognised through the utilisation of artefacts and that new knowledge may be established through doing rather than saying. User groups comprising of active old, frail old, carers and future old are actively engaged in the research enquiry.



research – design – artefact – reflection (traditional)  
artefact – research – reflection – design

### Collaborators & Partners

Dr Gail Mountain & Tricia Ware, Centre for Health & Social Care Research, Sheffield Hallam University  
Help the Aged  
U3A - Sheffield

### References

Chamberlain, Bowen (2006) 'Use of the Artefact in Human-centred design', chapter 7 p.65-74. in *Designing Accessible technology* edited by Clarkson, Langdon, Robinson. Published by Springer ISBN 1-84628-364-7  
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### Potential Benefits

#### For older people

The project aims to inform the design of products and environments that will not only provide physical solutions to the problem of independent living but opportunities to enhance quality of life. The ageing population should be treated as consumers who have lifestyle choices and not simply as just patients. The outcome of the project may inform what needs and requirements exist for flexible and adaptable products that change through life course. The study will enable society to utilise desirable domestic products and environments into older age without the need for costly adaptations, often traumatic changes and solutions that stigmatise. Design can minimise the 'badge of infirmity'.

#### For society

It is well documented that the increasing population in the UK will bring about significant care issues in the future. Well designed domestic environments will enhance the opportunities for home care and reduce the need for costly adaptive solutions required to maintain independent living. Once lucrative youth markets are contracting companies will increasingly benefit from older people spending more on goods to improve the quality of life.



#### Contact Details

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